

A Letter from the Fried-Cassorla's - 2016

Updated 4-17-17 If you cannot see the pictures, please copy and paste this line into your browser:

http://www.fried-cas.com/Family_and_Friends/family_letters/fcfamltr16/

Dear family and friends,

Our 2016 was a mainly good year -- and we hope yours was, too. Sorry this letter is so late getting out to you. Before continuing... a sad note, we lost two very dear people: our almost lifelong friend Charlene Kahlor Kramer and cousin Raymond Hasson. I will talk about them later in this letter.

Martha's performing with Germantown Concert Choir, Singing City, and Myers Community Choir

Singing is a huge part of my wife's life! She sings with Singing City (her main gig), Germantown Concert Choir, and Myers Community Choir. I was with the Myers choir too, earlier in the year, before my college teaching took that time slot. (see later.) And I returned to it last week. Martha is perhaps at her happiest when she sings -- and her enthusiasm is infectious, whether around the house or in a concert hall. Plus, she has vocal instruction. This year, her new teacher is Cheryl Wood, and she loves her weekly lessons.

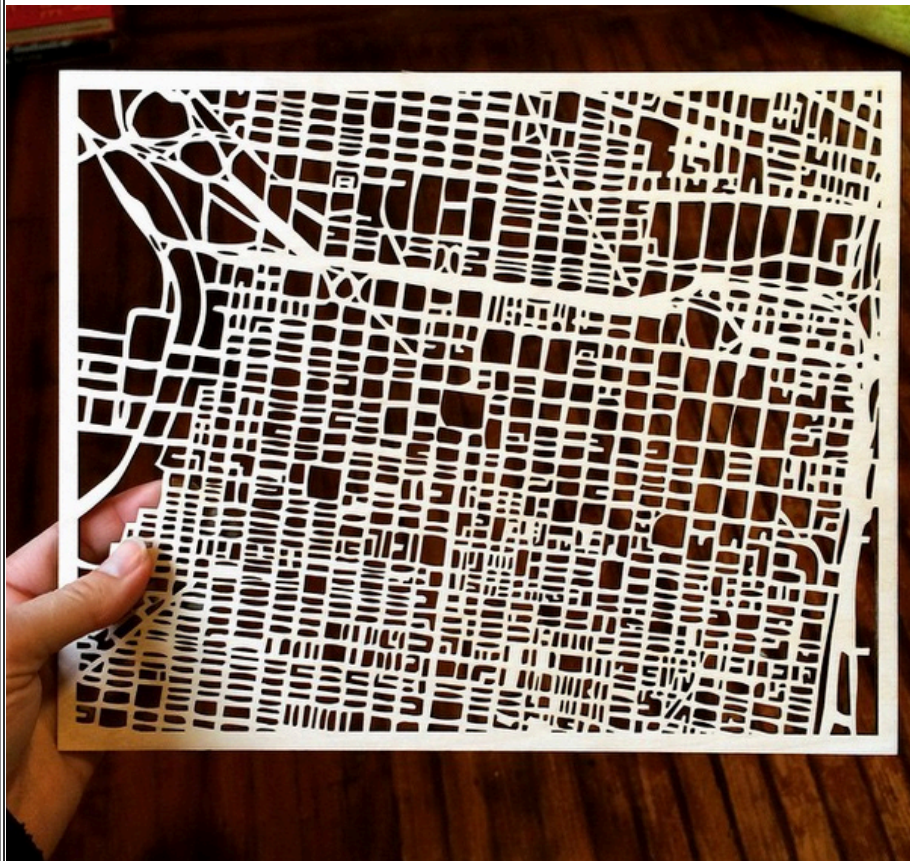
Martha continues to enjoy providing psychotherapy to patients in Jenkintown, where she maintains a private office, and in Center City (downtown). Also, she has a great and active Book Club based on our own 2 or 3 block area. They have great readings, discussions and chats every month.



I was quietly shopping at Costco, when this bear grabbed me. Accost-Co?

Emma's varied life

Emma has been enjoying her job with J2 / Exit, which is an advertising and communications firm. Plus, she continues making her wonderful wooden maps of neighborhoods in Philadelphia. She sells some of these on the site called etsy.com Since this has been going so well, she will expand her focus to other cities. Some of the profits from this enterprise have gone to charities.



Emma's handiwork, an enterprise which she is expanding. Stay tuned!

Art is Emma's ongoing passion, and she had an opening downtown at a gallery. She continues to make and sell paper-cut maps such as the one above and may even be expanding her map empire into strange new cities! You can see her opening event at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxTVzb38NV4>

Emma has been volunteering with our local Rail Park, a project under way to convert an unused elevated rail track and tunnel into something like New York's High Line. Read about this exciting project here:

<http://www.uwishunu.com/2016/10/philadelphia-breaks-ground-viaduct-rail-park/#sm.0000fmi9u0ofqepryqs28f8c1s7ls>

[A performance of two of my plays here in Elkins Park](#)

I had the good fortune of seeing two of my short plays performed in February at White Pines Productions in Elkins Park, near where we live. One was called *Ariadne in Elkins*. It concerns mysterious people at a cafe, and two people who get acquainted and fall in love. There are various themes of Greek mythology interlaced and good comedy IMHO! Decide for yourself by watching here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbsnO5BqHkE>

Be sure to see the cast credits and description if interested. Scripts and more are available on my web site at <http://fried-cas.com/creative/#playsanchor>

The second play was *Does It Quack?* That takes place within a TV game show, where various contestants propose and demonstrate various solutions to the question: How can we be happy? Much mayhem and romance ensue! Many compliments to my talented and dedicated cast. This includes the fabulous Sasha Allen, and a superb cast. All are credited in the youtube listing.

At no admission charge, you can view it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eWjGWJHBh8>

I engage in some mild wrestling with "Miranda Muscles" at 4:16 or so there. Have laugh at my expense, why don't you!

The whole experience was a joy!

[A visit to L.A., Ben and family visits us in Philly](#)

We had a wonderful visit to L.A. in the Fall and a second such trip a few weeks ago.

Ben and Priya are such terrific hosts! we spent so much time playing with Meera. It was easy to turn into a child again, crawling around on the floor with her. She screamed with delight when she saw these electric cars we got for her. They run on a track and have flashing lights. Of course the excitement fades, but wow! So great for awhile. We also visited the L.A. Zoo, the Norton Simon Museum, and LACHMA or MOCHA - I forget which!

Then, this December, Ben, Priya and Meera came east and spent several days with us. Saw ***Frog and Toad*** at the Arden --totally charming. Meera was rapt during the whole show. We also hit the Please Touch Museum and took in the Comcast Holiday Show.

A fabulous trip to Antigua!

We had such an amazing time in Antigua! Check out my gorgeous vacation video here: (Choose 1080 p to see the real colors and images. If that it streams too slowly, step it down.).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1EyP7OvPmw>

My surgery for diverticulitis

I had a case of diverticulitis that would not go away. So upon the recommendation of our GI specialist, I had an operation performed by a highly skilled surgeon here at Abington Hospital. Afterwards, I was in pain for only a short period. Soon I was running around the hospital like a speed demon rolling along with my drip bag on a pole, taking the corners fast. Today, I feel great. So if you need this type of operation, get expert advice and consider the procedure strongly.

Working as Adjunct Professor of English at Gwynedd Mercy University

This was a fabulous experience for me, start to finish. My students were interested, creative, hard-working, and more. I hope to show you my curriculum, into which I poured so much effort. I can hardly describe how wonderful it was to research and teach this course!

A few people I know said they wanted to virtually "take the course." If you are among them, know that I will work on it.

Meanwhile, here are a few of my favorites (mostly classics) you can check out, chiefly here on Youtube:

Mending Wall by Robert Frost, (subject to many interpretations, which I enjoyed debating)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DL7CkIKfxa4>

Do Not Go Gentle by Dylan Thomas, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mRec3VbH3w>

The Lovesong of J. Alred Prufrock by T.S. Eliot <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mRec3VbH3w>

Def Poetry - Sonia Sanchez - Poem for Some Women by Sonia Sanchez (brutal, be forewarned)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7X8gIrkUTh0>

My Transformation by Brandon Deloatch (a former student at Edison, This is my favcoite reading of his.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1DciDxYGIY>

Death of our great, almost life-long friend, Charlene Kahlor-Kramer

You do not get an unlimited number of good friends in this life..... For us, Charlene was one of them. Maybe you are fortunate and have a good friend like her... who calls at regular intervals and truly wants to know what is up with you.... And who has stories to share and wants to hear yours, who is concerned and interested in all she meets....And so we lost Charlene abruptly and unexpectedly. We feel for her wonderful husband, Roger, who has got to be one of the sweetest men on the planet.... and we greatly miss Charl.

I lost my dear cousin Raymond Hasson

Raymond was a first cousin, a childhood friend, and a loyal, sweet-natured cousin. He adored his childhood in New Lots, Brooklyn (now East New York). It was a fine, Sephardic Jewish neighborhood, where everybody knew everybody, and it was unbelievably friendly (as my Aunt Bella says).

I will tell you one of his stories now, in his voice, approximately as he told it:

“Albert, New Lots was such a wonderful neighborhood. So warm and so caring. I have so many stories, where do I begin? Once my Mom sent me to the deli a few blocks away (*I guess Ray was about 8 at the time.*). I walked in and told the two men at the counter: ‘My mom wants two one-eighths of lox.’ The counter men were puzzled.

"One asked me: ‘So you mean you want a quarter pound?’ I said, ‘No!!! My Mom wants two one eighths!’ From then on, whenever I walked in, one would announce: ‘Here comes Mister Two One-Eighths!’”

Working for Bernie Sanders, then Hillary Clinton, now with Bernie's Our Revolution

Having Donald Trump as our new president is a set-back for the world. But I, Martha and many of our friends are not depressed. We are moving on and are energized. His victory was engineered mainly by the billionaires who control our society and do everything they can to keep Americans distracted from the truth and unable to see it.

As examples, we need Free Health Care for All and Free Universal College Education. The U.S. can afford these things. Coverage of those issues was scant. Yet coverage of Trump's every ignorant utterance was blasted all over the media. We are working with Our Revolution, founded by Bernie Sanders, to bring about a more just society. Learn more at: <https://ourrevolution.com/>

Funny 1: Awkward Family Photos [Grandparents Offer 5 Tips To A Long And Healthy Marriage.](#)

Funny 2: This is one of our favorite funny videos of the year (2017, actually). It features a svery souldful, singing, piano-playing beagle!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6nhSDAKRj8>

Betty keeps on keepin' on at 95!

Betty Cassorla turned 95 on Valentine's Day, 2017! My Mom continues to live at our home where she has lived since 1957 in Bellmore, Long Island, NY. And while her mind is not as sharp as it used to be, we still convey the love we have for each other. My brother Marshall visits regularly, and she has good-humored, dedicated aides. They talk to her during the day quite a bit and read to her from her own autobiography. Also, we bought her the Hasbro robot cat named Joy. It is a pleasure for her to pet it, watch it roll over and hear it purr.

Despite all of this, my Mom is in reasonably good health, with aches and pains of course. My brother Marsh still sets up two and three-way Skype sessions for my Mom and brothers. We have been singing to: "*People will Say We're in Love*," from *Oklahoma* and "*Loverly*" from *My Fair Lady* recently. If you want to hear my mom tell some of her stories, search on Youtube for Betty Cassorla, and you will find 9 or so. I visited my mom in early April, and we had a great time watching some old family movies together.

I, Albert, have retired to a world of activities and learning!

This is my second year of retirement. So I will repeat (same as last year) what I have retired TO, in brief:

1. studying at several universities
2. writing plays, poetry, short stories and essays
3. staging my plays
4. volunteering at Edison-Fareira High School, in an impoverished neighborhood where the students' needs are great
5. activism for Bernie Sanders
6. volunteering in my neighborhood
7. maybe being a better husband (let Martha be the judge of that!), friend and family man
8. doing somewhat more exercise
9. managing finances
10. traveling

Now, this Spring, I am taking Philosophy 101 at the University of Pennsylvania. It's great being on the lovely Penn campus, which is a quick, train ride away, all for just 85 cents a ride (senior rate) on a comfy commuter rail line.

Volunteering at Edison H.S.

Edison High School is in my mind and my system. I have many friends there among the faculty, and I still get a lot of warm greetings from my former students.

So I have been volunteering, mainly in English classrooms, but also in Social Studies (I am dual certified). In Social Studies, I have taught lessons on The Parthenon and Pompeii, two of my favorites. I base my lessons on my visits there, including web site photos and videos. In English classes, I helped students with the task de jour.

Melrose Park Philosophy Club

Our **Melrose Park Philosophy Club** continues to ponder concepts such as chaos theory, philosophy of science and more. We have a wonderful group of folks gathering every two months or so for great conversation and camaraderie. Interested in attending or getting on our e-mail list? Do drop me a line!

Our 2016 topics included:

- Philosophy of Language
- What is consciousness? - Some of us will be seeing Tom Stoppard's play, *The Hard Problem*, soon. It deals with the same topic.
- Faith - what it means (led by my friend Chris Hill) and
- History of Philosophy from through the early Renaissance (led by me)
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer led by Lee Wagner

Melrose Park Neighbors Association

And the work of our **Melrose Park Neighbors Association** has been rewarding. Since 1990, we have been providing a good way to build the neighborhood, fight over-development, beautify the hood and more. Our new leader is the remarkably energetic and bright spirit, Caryl Levin. Over the years, we have: increased the sense of neighborliness; helped get a \$2.6 million train station built, kept teens off railroad tracks with fences; reduced water pollution in our local stream Mill Run; planted flowers and much more.

For the full story, visit here: <http://www.melroseparkneighbors.org> Again, I recommend building or joining a neighborhood association as a great way to connect and accomplish much.

Lest we forget!

Here are some photos from yesteryear...



Elsie Fried, Lou and Betty Cassorla, and Stanley Fried -- the great ones!

Still close, today!



Do you recognize this girl, circa 1955?



Betty and Lou, circa 1944



My fifth Birthday Party, at our Brooklyn apartment at 732 Alabama Avenue.

My co-stars, left to right are: Sandy Cassorla, Meryl Camhi (Annibale). Kenny Cassorla, Roberta Cassorla (Wagner), and moi.

Happy New Year!

Here we are, celebrating too much at Penn's Landing!



I continue to talk, lunch and occasionally work off calories by running with my great and attentive friend Dick Goldberg!

Also, as the official biographer of my lifelong friend, Mark Zakarin, I am hard at work on new entries.





Did someone ask for red berries?

Well, that's it for now! Stay good and be as happy as you can possibly be!



Love,

***Albert, Martha, and
family!***

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Poems, movie reviews, biographies,
photography, plays and more are at:

<http://www.fried-cas.com/creative>

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Cassorla" or "playwrightguy"

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